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Illegal trade in wildlife

Draft resolution submitted by the Committee of the Whole

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Deeply concerned about the increasing scale of illegal trade in wildlife and its products, including forest products, including timber and marine species, and its adverse economic, social and environmental impacts,

Recognizing that the illegal trade in wildlife and its adverse impacts contributes to damage to ecosystems and rural livelihoods, undermines good governance and the rule of law and threatens national security and negatively impacts on sustainable utilization, including eco-tourism and wildlife-based tourism,

Recognizing also the role of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora as the principal international instrument for ensuring that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival, and acknowledging the role of other Conventions in the area, such as the Convention on Migratory Species,

Recalling paragraph 203 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", in which it was recognized that firm and strengthened action needs to be taken on both the supply and demand sides, taking into account the role of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,

Recalling Governing Council decision 27/9 on advancing justice, governance and law for environmental sustainability, in which the Council noted, inter alia, that offences against the environment, in particular illegal trade in wildlife, including timber, are increasingly committed by organized criminal groups and recalled that international cooperation at all levels in accordance with international law, while respecting national jurisdictions, contributes to combating those offences more effectively,

Reaffirming Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40 on crime prevention and criminal justice responses to illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora, in which the Council encouraged Member States to make illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora involving organized criminal groups a serious crime, as defined in article 2, paragraph (b), of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,

Reaffirming resolution 23/1 of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on strengthening a targeted crime prevention and criminal justice response to combat illicit trafficking in forest products, including timber, which encourages member States to make illicit trafficking in forest products, including timber, involving organized criminal groups a serious crime, as defined in article 2, paragraph (b), of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, where appropriate,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 68/193, emphasizing that coordinated action is critical to eliminate corruption and disrupt the illicit networks that drive and enable trafficking in wildlife, timber and timber products, harvested in contravention of national laws,

Welcoming the outcome of the twenty-second session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which encouraged the integration and coordination of efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice to deal effectively with the challenge posed by emerging crimes that have a significant impact on the environment,

Welcoming the commitments made by the ministers of tourism of Africa, the Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization and the representatives of relevant national and international organizations at a meeting held in Berlin on 6 March 2014,

Welcoming the conferences on illegal wildlife trade held in Gaborone, Paris and London, among others,

Stressing the need to maintain the political momentum generated through those and other high-level international and regional initiatives,

Welcoming the adoption of the African Elephant Action Plan as a framework for the conservation and management of the African elephant across the species range and the subsequent establishment the African Elephant Fund under the administration of the United Nations Environment Programme as a funding mechanism towards the implementation of the Action Plan,

Welcoming also the creation of the International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime, which includes the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Interpol, the World Customs Organization and the World Bank, as an important collaborative effort to strengthen enforcement,

Acknowledging the value of relevant United Nations Environment Programme activities for international efforts to combat illegal trade in wildlife more effectively, such as, but not limited to, the Green Customs Initiative, and the work of United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre, and as a partner in the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management and the Global Forest Watch Initiative,

Acknowledging also the crucial role played by Governments and all relevant stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities, civil society and the private sector, in combating illegal trade in wildlife,

1. *Affirms* its strong determination to prevent, combat and eradicate the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, including timber and marine species globally;

2. *Strongly encourages* member States and regional economic integration organizations to:

(a) Implement their commitments on fighting illegal trade in wildlife already taken in other forums;

(b) Provide leadership and mobilization of resources, including for the African Elephant Fund and other wildlife related funding mechanisms for strengthening the fight against the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, in particular by making sure that the evidence on the trends and extent of the illegal trade, and action being taken, is robust and up to date;

(c) Take targeted action to eradicate supply and transit of and demand for illegal wildlife products including through raising awareness of illegal trade in wildlife and its impacts while respecting and protecting the legal and sustainable trade of wildlife products;

(d) Support work to reinforce the legal framework, including through deterrent measures, where necessary, and to strengthen capacity of the entire enforcement chain;

(e) Promote at all levels cross-agency cooperation to tackle the environmental, economic, social and security dimensions of the illegal trade in wildlife and their products;

(f) Initiate and promote action to further strengthen regional and international cooperation between source, transit and destination countries, including through additional support to wildlife law enforcement networks;

(g) Promote and implement policies of zero tolerance towards all illegal activities including corruption associated with the illegal trade in wildlife;

(h) Support the development of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for communities affected by the illegal trade in wildlife and its adverse impacts with the full engagement of the communities in and adjacent to wildlife habitats as active partners in conservation and sustainable use, enhancing communities rights and capacity to manage and benefit from wildlife and wilderness;

(i) Enhance cooperation for the timely and cost-efficient repatriation of live illegally traded wildlife, including eggs as called for by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;[1]

3. *Urges* parties to effectively implement their obligations under Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora as well as other relevant multilateral agreements, acknowledging that the International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime, which includes the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Convention secretariat, Interpol, the World Customs Organization and the World Bank, and other relevant international organizations, can provide valuable assistance in that regard;

4. *Urges* all those engaged in efforts to combat illegal trade in wildlife to promote synergies, cooperation and coordination and avoid duplication;

5. *Calls upon* the General Assembly to consider the issue of illegal wildlife trade in its sixty-ninth session;

6. *Stresses*, in the light of the negative impact of wildlife trafficking on sustainable development, the importance of addressing the issue in the context of the post-2015 development framework;

7. *Underlines* the importance of keeping the issue of illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products on the international agenda;

8. *Urges* all countries, within their capabilities, to assign and mobilize resources to combat illegal trade in wildlife in accordance with their national policies, priorities, plans and programmes. Such resources may include domestic funding through relevant policies, development strategies and national budgets, and bilateral and multilateral funding, as well as private sector involvement; donors and others in a position to do so are encouraged, on an urgent basis, to mobilize and provide financial resources and provide assistance to support the efforts of developing countries to address illegal trade in wildlife, especially to create and strengthen national capacities;

9. *Calls upon* all countries to actively engage in, and/or support, on-the-ground based activities on the part of International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime members to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of local enforcers and improve national and international cooperation;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme:

(a) To provide by the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly an analysis of the environmental impacts of illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products;

(b) To continue and to reinforce the relevant activities of the United Nations Environment Programme in collaboration with member States and other relevant international, regional and national actors, to raise awareness about the problems and the risks associated with the supply of, transit in and demand for illegal wildlife products;

(c) To work closely with the International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime, the United Nations Development Programme and the Secretary-General's Rule of Law Group, notably with regard to core areas of United Nations Environment Programme expertise, such as environmental aspects of the rule of law, judicial training and information exchange about judicial decisions and practices;

(e) To continue to support national Governments, upon their request, to develop and implement the environmental rule of law, and in that context to continue its efforts to fight the illegal wildlife trade and to continue to promote actions including through capacity-building;

[1] Article VIII, para 4 (b), Res conf 10.7 (revised by COP 15).

(f) To take a proactive role in United Nations Environment Programme administration of the African Elephant Fund to ensure its contribution to the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan;

(g) To report on the implementation of the activities listed in paragraphs 10 (a)–(g) to be discussed at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly;

11. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.